

Longacre's Ledger

The Journal of The Flying Eagle and Indian Cent Collectors' Society

Volume 33.1, Issue 117

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April 2023



My "Unique" Indian Head Cent Collection
By Steve Feiertag



1856 Flying Eagle:
Deciphering the Enigma
By Greg Slaughter

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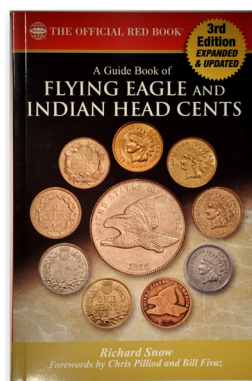
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The Flying Eagle and Indian Cent Collectors' Society

Our mission is to gather and disseminate information related to James B. Longacre (1794-1869), with emphasis on his work as Chief Engraver of the Mint (1844 -1869) with a primary focus on his Flying Eagle and Indian Cent coinage.

Founded 1991

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On the cover...

The 1864 Bronze, No L "Gin Blossom." Chris Pilliod explains how center cuds are formed in his "President's Letter."

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Longacre's Ledger

2023 Vol. 33.1 Issue #117

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If you have a substantive article you would like to contribute, please follow these guidelines:

- ✓ Please send article text in a Word or text document to the editor's e-mail address. If images are embedded in the document, please also send images in separate files.
- ✓ Please make images 300 dpt resolution
- ✓ For new variety attribution submissions please send to Rick Snow at the address above. Please include \$4 per coin and return postage, typically \$20. Make check payable to Eagle Eye.
Attributions can take up to 3 months.
- ✓ Please feel free to contact the editor if you have any questions.

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#119 2023 Vol. 33.3	November 1, 2023	FUN 2024
#120 2024 Vol. 34.1	March 1, 2024	CSNS 2024
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Special thanks to Charmy Harker
for proofreading the articles.

The President's Letter

By Chris Pilliod

This is my 75th President's letter and let's talk a little metallurgy... but not just any metallurgy; This is fun metallurgy—"Metallurgy Lite". Most of us collect other series than just Indian Cents. A lot of us like all copper issues. And at the recent Baltimore Coin Show it dawned on me that there is one Indian Cent variety that is overlooked but in my mind is deserving of a Redbook listing.

As I looked through a dealer's showcase I noted a nice 1855 Large cent with slanted 5's; a wonderful Newcomb-9 variety showing a nice example of a "Knob on Ear." These are popular amongst Large Cent collectors and bring a de-



TrueView Images provided by Collectors Universe
1855 Knob on Ear

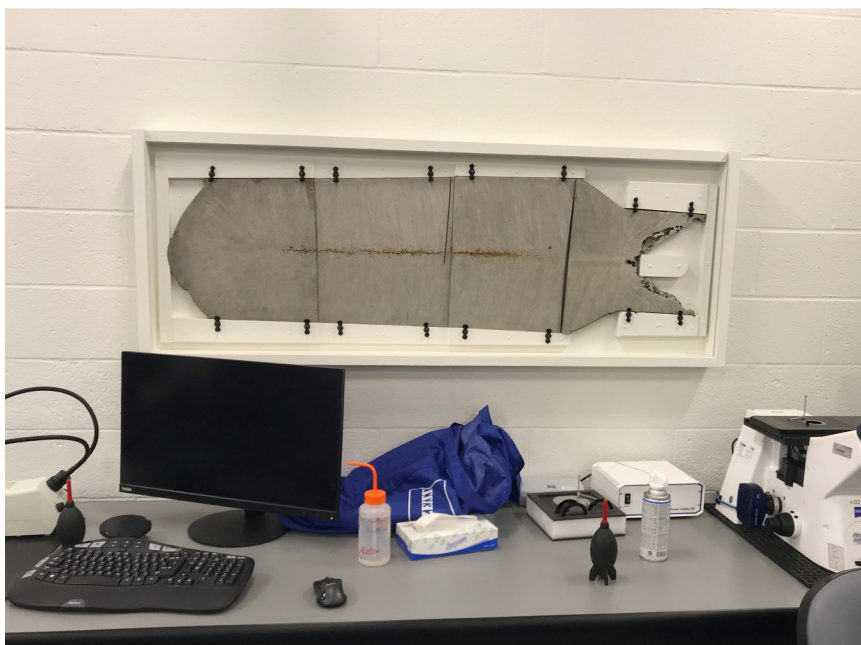
cent premium even though they are quite available in most grades, being difficult to obtain in mint state. Often collectors refer to the Knob Ear as an "internal cud" error. But this really isn't quite a proper technical description. Cuds are formed when a die cracks and then propagates to the point when it completely fractures. These usually initiate on the rim of the coin where the stresses are the greatest.

The 1855 "Knob Ear" variety is almost in the dead center of the coin, where stresses are at their lowest point during striking—the least likely area for die failure. Theoretically the dead center of the die experiences no lateral stresses at all, and the stress is 100% compression. When you squeeze metals in compression their strengths are substantially higher when you pull on them, or in tension.

So what caused the die failure in this area? Let's look at the beginning of the life of a die steel. During melting and casting of the alloy used to produce die steels the center of the ingot is the weakest area. Traditional casting methods have porosity or "pipe" as metallurgists call it.

Back in the 1960's a metallurgist here at Carpenter Technology took a 5,000-lb ingot and had it cut longitudi-

nally along its entire length. It has been hanging in our Metallography Lab ever since. Over the years I always make a point to new hires to be sure and study the piece, as it is a quintessential and rare look at the solidification class you took in college. The ingot was cut exactly along the centerline of an ingot-- note almost the entire length is affected by shrinkage. The cause of the shrinkage, or "pipe" or "centerline void" is a result of metals being denser in the solid state than in the liquid state. Most metals are approximately 10% more dense in the solid state than liquid, some metals more and some less. So the last area to solidify in the center of an as-cast ingot is a void. Water, on the other hand, is an odd duck, in that in the solid state it is less dense than liquid, and floats.



Center Cut from a 5,000-lb steel ingot

A proper “hot working” or forging process usually will heal this centerline weakness, but not always. Think of hot working as a pile of cookie dough with a hole in the middle of the mix. By “patty-caking” the mix and working it together the void will be healed. Metallurgists even have hot working tables, with recommended hot-work ratios. Usually a minimum of 4:1 hot working ratio by diameter is adequate to heal the center of the pipe. So a 10-inch diameter as-cast ingot requires forging to a 2.5-inch diameter bar to fully heal the center and fuse the pipe. But every alloy behaves differently, and even the same alloy will solidify with varying amounts of pipe depending on casting variables. In today’s world there are casting methods that which produce completely sound centers, but this technology was almost 100 years away in 1855. Depending on forging and other variables the remnant pipe may not manifest itself dead-center of the finished bar.

Today the Mint orders die steels to a specification that must be certifiable to a melting method that completely casts a uniform ingot surface-to-center with no pipe or voids whatsoever. Since the mid-1970’s the alloy and processing the Mint employs is far superior to previous times. I recall when working with the Mint on new coinage alloys ten years ago they mentioned that for production of the zinc cent it is not uncommon to get over a million striking before retiring the die.

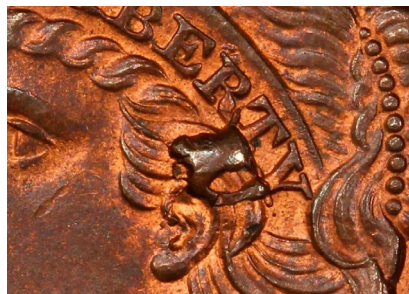
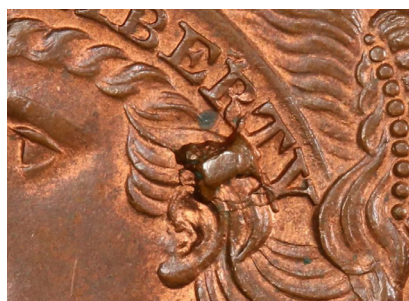
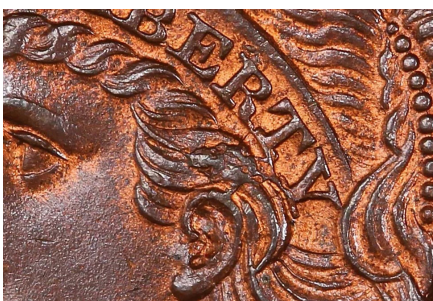
In cases where the pipe is more severe than normal, normal hot working won’t properly heal it, leaving small, very slight porosity; maybe not enough to see it with the naked eye but enough to significantly weaken the area. Even modest stress will be adequate to fracture a small piece off the die in production. This is likely what happened with the 1855 Large Cent with Knobbed Ear. Have a look



An example of centerline weakness in a cast ingot



Close up of the centerline weakness



Die stages of the 1855 Knob on Ear

at the die progression on the Knob Ear in the three stages shown here. As you can see the defect forms in the weakness near the center of the die, and with additional striking it advances as more and more of the die chips away. The latest stage shows a deep void in the die in a somewhat C-shape form.

The weakness of the die steel will always be near the center of the die, and will vary depending on downstream operations, such as forging, machining and other factors.

The Indian Cent version of the Knob Ear.

The 1855 Knob Ear Large Cent has a younger brother who is almost an identical twin. Let’s have a close look at the 1864



Die stages of the “Gin Blossom”

Bronze shown here. It has several features with similar characteristics to the Knob Ear. The defect is internal, and again quite close to the center of the die where the pipe exists. It also shows a progression of the defect as the weak area continued to fracture away with continued striking.

Over the years I have been fortunate enough to cherish or buy as described this variety, and while it is called “The Moustache Variety” when they get catalogued in my collection I use the moniker “Gin Blossom.” During his comedy routines W.C. Fields would often take pride in his oversized and roseated nose, referring to it as his “Gin Blossom”-- a result of a few too many cherished friendships with Kentucky bourbons. It is such a catchy nickname a rock and roll group even borrowed it for their name. Even though it’s not exactly on the nose, it’s close enough to add some fun to the variety.

The die progression observed on the Gin Blossom is very similar to that of the Knob Ear 1855 Large Cent. The location, visual characteristic and die progression are all very reminiscent of what the 1855 Knob Ear experienced just nine years earlier.

In my opinion this and the 1864 Doubled Die Obverse Snow-4 are the most desirable varieties for the Bronze issue that year. The Gin Blossom variety is well deserving of a Redbook listing, far exceeding in visual eye appeal and size the 1875 Reverse Center Dot (which likely was caused by microscopic centerline weakness or corrosion).

And again, as far as rarity, the variety far exceeds the rarity of the 1855 Knob Ear, and in high grades XF to UNC the Gin

Blossom is at least 30 times rarer. It just hasn’t gotten the respect or premium it deserves in my mind. What’s a fair price? I don’t determine market values but a nice MS63RB should be at least \$1,000 coin in my mind. Maybe more. I have six high grade examples in my collection and the most I paid has been \$400.

But Large Cents have enjoyed much more promotion over the years, with the Newcomb Guide Book and the Early American Copper Club having secured the series as one of the earliest specialized coin series. So I guess the moral of the story is marketing beats everything. Anyone want a “Gin Blossom”?



The back issues of the Longacre’s Ledger are now accessible on the Newman Numismatic Portal. The site is managed by the Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. Access is free to all and the files can be viewed at the following link:

<https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/publisherdetail/521577>

Special thanks to Len Augsburger for working on this.

My “Unique” Indian Head Cent Set
By Steve Feiertag

I’ve been working on a very unique Indian Head Cent set. While my 55-coin PCGS Registry set is currently ranked #6 in the “INDIAN CENTS BASIC SET, CIRCULATION STRIKES (1859-1909)” category and #2 in the “INDIAN CENTS BASIC SET, CIRCULATION STRIKES (1859-1909) - CAC,” that is not what makes this set unique.

Several collectors have previously put together Indian Head Cent sets that are 100% with CAC stickers. A few other collectors have previously put sets together where every coin has Rick Snow’s Eagle Eye Photo Seal. But according to Rick Snow, this is the ONLY set put together where EVERY coin has BOTH a CAC sticker AND an Eagle Eye Photo Seal!

Isn’t having BOTH stickers redundant? No doubt there’s a LOT of redundancy having both stickers. However, I believe that CAC and Rick Snow place different weights from each other on various factors, such as surface marks, strike, luster, die state, carbon/flecks, etc. I believe that Rick Snow places a heavier weight on strike and die state than does CAC, and he might also be a bit stricter on the amount of carbon spots/flecks than CAC, especially on coins graded MS66 and higher. On the other hand, I believe that CAC may have a slightly greater concern for color originality than does Rick Snow. By having both stickers on each coin, I believe I have the best of both worlds for this set!

I’ve had many upgrades in my set over the years. The oldest coin still in my present set goes back five years, to September 2017. I bought that coin from Rick Snow.

A couple of collectors expressed disbelief to me when I shared my plan for the uniqueness of this set. At least one felt I would never accomplish it in my lifetime, but he did truly wish me good luck, and he’s been rooting for me.

Putting together this set has given me the most fun, joy, and excitement I’ve had from our wonderful hobby, even more fun than in completing my lifelong collection of my highly ranked Type Sets and a few other sets. However, putting this set together was not easy, and I’ll describe the tremendous help I’ve received from MANY collectors and dealers in helping me accomplish this goal.



Steve Feiertag

Thank goodness I have my own business, where my assistant knows very well that I take time each day to search on the internet for coins. She also knows to interrupt me if I’m on the phone with a client, and a collector or dealer calls regarding coins. I have my priorities, lol!

Every day I look at www.collectorscorner.com for new listings of IHC’s. Every week I look at new listings of lots at GreatCollections, David Lawrence Rare Coins, Heritage, Legend Numismatics and Legend Auctions, Stacks, etc. I also receive DAILY emails from many dealers showing me their newps.

Just as helpful, and truly super appreciated, is the help I received from the collector community and several dealers. Since they knew of this project from postings on coin forums, I would get private messages, emails, and phone calls pointing out coins to me that might have the potential to fit the bill. Many have also sold me THEIR coins, including a regular

PCGS forum member who sold me his very attractive 1877 MS65RB that had both stickers on it (for those that don't know, the 1877 is the key date in this series)! I've had collectors and dealers alike offer me coins without CAC's (some raw) and my purchase was conditional upon those coins receiving CAC stickers, as well as me seeing excellent photos, so I could make a determination if it was a candidate for Rick's Photo Seal.

I even had a collector let me know that he noticed that one of the very top Indian Head Cent collectors had just "retired" his PCGS IHC set. I jumped on that, and before that collector with these high-grade coins had a chance to consign his coins, I did quick detective work to determine how to contact him. I then successfully negotiated buying seven of his coins.

Separately, I've had great cooperation from many dealers. If my research determined shortly before a major coin show that they had a coin or two in stock that I needed, and it looked real good, and it had a CAC sticker, I would ask them if they could run the coin over to Rick Snow's table at the show to ask him if that coin merited his Photo Seal. Several dealers were kind enough to do this for me, and Rick Snow was super generous with his cooperation, especially since he was not the one selling me those coins.

But most of all, this set would not have been completed without the significant and critical help of Rick Snow himself, the world's foremost authority on Flying Eagle and Indian Head Cents. As many of you know, he literally "wrote the book" on Flying Eagle and Indian Head Cents! When I first discussed with Rick Snow the challenge of putting together a set with these restrictions, I let him know I planned on having a minimum grade of MS64 (and each bronze coin with a color suffix would be no less than RB). It was Rick that suggested I raise that minimum to coins grading no less than MS65. He said that since the finished set with both a CAC and an Eagle Eye Photo Seal on every coin would be unique, he felt that having the set as "Gem" would indeed be more fitting for a unique set! While I was able to afford this (since I would still include RB coins and not be restricted only to coins with an RD suffix), I asked him if raising the minimum grade requirement would keep me from ever finishing this set? He had confidence I would indeed be able to accomplish it. Looking back, I'm thrilled he convinced me to climb a steeper hill, and the result now is a set that is fully GEM!

Rick also was kind and super generous enough to spend time giving me pointers on what it takes for a coin to merit his Eagle Eye Photo Seal, and things that make the coin fail. I'll pass a couple of pointers on: Obviously, the surface "distractions" (and where they appear) have to be few enough that the coin is "accurate" for that grade. Grading skills are a must!

Next, the first three feather tips from the left MUST show some detail – the more detail the better. As I examined coins, sure enough I'd see coins with what looked like nice strikes and very few surface distractions, but those three feather tips were amazingly often very weak, even on coins graded MS66. Those would not cut it.

While none of us like carbon spots and flecks, they invariably occur on many old copper coins. It's the nature of the beast. After a short time, I learned roughly what is acceptable and what is not. MS66's have a lower tolerance for carbon/flecks than MS65's. The area where the carbon spots/flecks appear is also a factor as well.

Finally, Die State is important to Rick. Obviously, a coin struck from newer dies is preferable to coins struck from older dies.

Some may ask if I "settled" on obtaining some coins just to fill holes? While I'm still on the hunt for some upgrades, I strongly believe that with only one exception, I did not settle at all. As most of you know, when a copper coin has an "RB" suffix, that coin has to have at least 5% Red in it and can have as much as 95% Red before it might get the RD suffix. My RB coins in this set all have a high percentage of Red. I encourage you to copy and paste the hotlink below to see the details of my Registry set. If you click on any photo, it will then allow you to see at least two or three other photos of each coin. I also included in the comment section the % red that Rick Snow feels each of the RB coins has.

The one exception to settling was my 1890 MS65RB. It was the last slot to fill, and in MY opinion, even though the coin has both stickers, the coin in hand is ugly (at least to me). So yes, I'm human. I settled for that coin. The good news is that a nice one in that same grade popped up on Great Collections at the end of November, so I now have what I feel is an eye appealing coin in that same grade for that date.

As I started this project, one or two PCGS forum members felt that Rick Snow's Photo Seal program was just self-serving. Now that I know Rick Snow quite well, this absolutely could not be further from the truth. While I did buy coins from Rick that were double-stickered, the vast majority of the coins were bought elsewhere. Out of the 55 coins currently in the Registry set, only a small handful were bought from Rick! But please don't think I'm being a greedy pig. I've made sure to treat Rick fairly, and every time I get an upgrade, I have Rick sell the dupes for me. I'm super appreciative of all his help and the knowledge he shared with me. As noted, I absolutely couldn't have even come close to completing this set without his generosity and help!

In addition to me being very proud of the uniqueness of this set, I'm not only proud of the Registry set ranking, but you will notice that of the 55 coins the Registry set, 28 have a "+" grade, that's 51%!

Copy and paste this hotlink to see coin photos with details, along with the comments section. Click on any photo from the hotlink to see several photos of each coin.

<https://www.pcg.com/setregistry/half-cents/indian-cents-major-sets/indian-cents-basic-set-circulation-strikes-1859-1909/published-set/266583>

Or this tiny URL: **<https://tinyurl.com/43bcurec>**

Or use your phone camera with this QR code:



Steve Feiertag collection - All PCGS, CAC and Photo Seal

Date	Grade	Pop	Pop Higher	Comments
1859	MS66	53	11	CAC Pop = 17. PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5).
1860	MS66	57	23	CAC Pop = 26. PDS Grade = 15 (5,5,5).
1861	MS66	94	32	CAC Pop = 31. Hansen Pedigree on label! Snow PDS Grade = Perfect 15 (5,5,5).
1862	MS66	91	35	CAC Pop = 33. PDS Grade = 13 (4,4,5).
1863	MS66+	45	3	From the set of Perfection 1. PDS Grade = 13 (4,5,4).
1864 CN	MS65+	11	53	PCGS Pop = 11. PDS Grade = 12 (4,4,4).
1864 Br.	MS66+ RD	8	5	PDS Grade = 13 (5,3,5). Blazing luster, wear sunglasses to avoid getting blinded!
1864 With L	MS66RB	18	3	CAC Pop = 9. PDS Grade = 12 (4,4,4). Rick says 90% Red.



1860 MS66 PCGS PS/CAC



1861 MS66 PCGS PS/CAC

Date	Grade	# Pop	Pop Higher	Comments
1865	MS65+ RB	3	12	PCGS Pop only 3, with only 12 finer in RB. PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5). Rick says 90% Red.
1866	MS65+ RB	2	7	CAC Pop = 33. PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5). Rick says this coin is 99% red.
1867	MS65RB	109	8	CAC Pop = 49. PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5). Rick says 60% Red.
1868	MS66+ RB	2	0	PCGS Pop ONLY 2, none finer as RB! PDS Grade = 14 (5,5,4). Rick says 95% Red.
1869	MS65+ RD	1	6	PCGS Pop = ONLY this one! Only six finer. PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5) RD.
1870	MS65+ RD	16	11	PCGS Pop = 16. CAC Pop is 10, but that includes ALL CAC coins graded only MS65RD WITHOUT the "+". PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5).
1871	MS65+ RB	3	2	PCGS Pop is ONLY 3, with only 2 RB finer. PDS Grade = 15 (5,5,5). Rick says 70% Red.
1872	MS65RB	92	19	CAC Pop = 30. Grade = 14 (4,5,5). Rick Snow says this is 95% Red.
1873	MS66RB	10	0	PCGS Pop only 11, none finer in RB. CAC Pop = 7. PDS Grade = 15 (5,5,5). Rick says 50% Red.



1866 MS65+RB PCGS PS/CAC



1869 MS65+RD PCGS PS/CAC



1871 MS65+RB PCGS PS/CAC



1872 MS65RB PCGS PS/CAC

Date	Grade	# Pop	Pop Higher	Comments
1874	MS65RB	140	14	CAC Pop = 55. PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5). Rick says 85% red.
1875	MS66RB	6	1	PCGS pop = 7, CAC pop only 5. PDS Grade = 13 (3,5,5). Rick says 80% Red.
1876	MS66RD	11	4	CAC Pop = 5 (only 1 CAC at 67RD). PDS Grade = 15 (5,5,5).
1877	MS65RB	90	8	CAC Pop = 30. PDS Grade = 13 (4,5,4). Rick says it's 90% red.
1878	MS66RD	13	6	Tom Bender Pedigree. CAC Pop = 8. PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5).
1879	MS65RD	67	71	CAC Pop = 11. PDS = 13 (4,4,5).
1880	MS66RB	7	1	CAC Pop = .6 (NO CAC's at 67RB), EEPS Pop = 2, none finer. PDS Grade = 15 (5,5,5). Rick Snow says this is 99% Red.
1881	MS66+ RD	7	5	PCGS Pop = Only 5; only five finer. PDS Grade = 15 (5,5,5).
1882	MS65+ RD	6	35	PDS Grade = 13 (4,4,5).
1883	MS65RD	70	52	CAC Pop = 9. PDS grade = 11 (4,3,4).
1884	MS66RB	15	1	CAC Pop = 14. PDS Grade = 15 (5,5,5). Rick says 85% Red
1885	MS65+ RB	5	15	Snow PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5). Rick says 90% Red.



1877 MS65 PCGS PS/CAC



1881 MS66+RD PCGS PS/CAC



1882 MS65+RD PCGS PS/CAC



1884 MS66RB PCGS PS/CAC

Date	Grade	# Pop	Pop Higher	Comments
1886	MS65+ RD	1	8	PCGS Pop = ONLY 1. PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5).
1887	MS66RD	33	16	CAC Pop = 13. PDS Grade = 12 (3,4,5).
1888	MS65+ RB	3	2	PDS Score = 14 (4,5,5). Rick says 99% Red.
1889	MS65RB	65	4	CAC pop = 19. Snow Grade = 14 (5,5,4). Rick says 99% Red.
1890	MS65RB	58	4	CAC Pop = 23. PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5). Rick says 75% Red.
1891	MS65RD	80	48	Old Green-label holder. CAC Pop = 7. PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5).
1892	MS66RD	23	7	CAC Pop = 9. Dayton-Bender pedigree.
1893	MS66+ RD	13	4	CAC Pop = 13. PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5).
1894	MS66+ RD	47	3	PCGS Pop = 45. PDS Grade = 13 (5,5,3).
1895	MS66+ RD	17	13	PCGS Pop = 17. PDS Grade = 12 (4,4,4).
1896	MS66+ RD	8	12	PDS grade = 15 (5,5,5).
1897	MS65+ RD	4	34	While the PCGS Pop is only 4, out of the 102 coins graded MS65RD or 65+RD, only 8 of those 102 have a CAC! PDS grade = 13 (4,5,4).
1898	MS66+ RD	9	17	PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5).
1899	MS66+ RD	74	46	CAC Pop = 42 for grades 66RD and 66+RD, PCGS AND NGC. PDS Grade = 15 (5,5,5).



1888 MS65+RB PCGS PS/CAC



1892 MS66RD PCGS PS/CAC



1896 MS66+RD PCGS PS/CAC



1898 MS66+RD PCGS PS/CAC

Date	Grade	# Pop	Pop Higher	Comments
1900	MS66+ RD	44	32	CAC Pop = 31. PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5).
1901	MS66+ RD	31	27	PCGS Pop = 31. PDS Grade 15 (5,5,5).
1902	MS66RD	69	47	CAC Pop = 19.
1903	MS66+ RD	25	17	PCGS Pop = 25. PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5).
1904	MS66+ RD	14	14	PCGS Pop = 14. PDS Grade = 12 (3,4,5).
1905	MS66+ RD	12	5	PCGS Pop is 11. Of the 133 coins graded MS66RD or 66+RD, only 16 have a CAC. PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5).
1906	MS66RD	70	14	CAC Pop = 20. PDS Grade = 12 (4,4,4).
1907	MS66RB	11	3	CAC Pop = 6, none finer in 66RB. PDS Grade = 15 (5,5,5). Rick says 99% Red. Here's his other comments: "This coin is close to perfect! It is also close to full red, or maybe it should be graded full red. I don't think you could ask for anything better for the grade."
1908	MS66+ RD	53	4	PCGS Pop = 38; only 4 finer. PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5).
1908-S	MS65+ RD	12	94	PCGS Pop = 10. PDS Grade = 14 (5,5,4).
1909	MS65+ RD	27	309	PCGS Pop = 25. PDS Grade = 14 (4,5,5).
1909-S	MS66RD	31	13	CAC Pop = 15. Tom Bender pedigree!



1901 MS66+RD PCGS PS/CAC



1905 MS66+RD PCGS PS/CAC



1908-S MS65+RD PCGS PS/CAC



1909-S MS66RD PCGS PS/CAC

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1856 Flying Eagle: Deciphering the Enigma *Greg Slaughter*

The 1856 Flying Eagle Cent is a rare gem of the numismatic world, and its historical significance and popularity make it a must-have for many collectors. Minted for Congress, the President, and other VIPs, this coin played a crucial role in the passage of the bill that authorized the Small Cents. It also played a significant role in popularizing coin collecting in the United States. But despite its rarity and importance, it has been held back from reaching its full potential because there has been much ambiguity determining which ones are the Originals and which ones are the more numerous restrikes that followed.

Which ones are the Originals?

The originals are the ones that were minted before the Coinage Act February 21, 1857 which authorized the Small Cent. Since they weren't yet authorized, the originals are technically patterns. But, the restrikes, struck after 1856, were authorized by that Act and are not patterns.

For the last three years, through extensive research and writing, I've been on a mission to shed light on this coin in general, to decipher the originals versus restrikes enigma in particular, and ultimately to unlock this coin's full potential. In this article, I'll be summarizing my findings, highlighting new information, and referencing previous articles for those who want to dive deeper.

Last year, I contributed two groundbreaking articles to this journal that together remove virtually all ambiguity in determining which ones are the Originals and which ones are the restrikes. I'll be revisiting these findings and exploring new insights, including some subtleties that were previously overlooked.

Determining the Originals - Step 1

To determine the originals, the first step was to determine, especially for Snow-3s, which ones are MS and which ones are Proofs. There have been several attempts to answer this question over the last 50 years. Richard Snow's "How to tell a Mint State from a Proof 1856 Flying Eagle" (Vol. 30.2, August 2020) covers some of the attempts other numismatists have

made to answer this question and also provides an account of how his thinking on this question has evolved over the years. My analysis here on which are MS and which are Proofs is in complete agreement and corroborates Richard Snow's current view.

I covered this first step to determining the originals in the first of the aforementioned two articles I contributed, "1856 Flying Eagle Snow-3: MS or Proof?" (Vol. 32.1, April 2022). In that article, based upon a comprehensive study, I demonstrated that all the traditional diagnostics of Proof were unreliable, except for one - weakness of strike. By discarding the unreliable diagnostics and applying the sole reliable diagnostic, weakness of strike, I was able to demonstrate that all but one Snow-3 are clearly MS coins.

Furthermore, based upon the fact that none of the other die pair varieties (except Snow-10) have ever had even one coin demonstrating even the slightest weakness of strike, I concluded that those other die pair varieties are all Proofs. As further evidence, I pointed out that Snow-3 is the only die pair variety with coins that exhibit strike doubling (roughly 20% do), which is possible for MS coins minted on the stream press, but which is not possible for Proofs minted on the screw press.

The article reaches its conclusions based upon an empirical analysis of the common diagnostics of Proofs. For a deeper appreciation of the result of that empirical study, let's explore the physical phenomena behind these conclusions:

Mirrored Fields: The 1856 Flying Eagle cent is notorious for its unreliable mirrored fields, resulting in much misattribution of MS coins as Proofs and vice versa. The use of Proof dies, which were polished, to strike all 1856 Flying Eagle cents (both MS and Proofs), meant that, even for MS coins, the initial coins minted had mirrored fields. The first MS Snow-3s exhibited mirrored fields, despite profound weakness of strike clearly demonstrating they couldn't possibly be Proofs.

But, when Proof dies were utilized to strike hundreds of Proofs, the mirrored fields eventually faded until the dies were repolished. Since Snow-9s were produced in greater quantities than usual for Proofs of that time, less attention was paid to the regular repolishing of dies necessary to maintain mirrored fields.

As a result, many Snow-9s, despite being Proofs, lack mirrored fields.

Weakness of Strike: While mirrored fields may be misleading, weakness of strike is a trustworthy indicator of Proof versus MS for the 1856 Flying Eagle cent. Proof coins were always made with a full, complete strike using the screw press. On the other hand, MS coins were minted on the steam press, which was never able to work against the especially hard copper-nickel alloy to deliver a full strike.

Have you ever been perplexed by the fact that PCGS and other organizations focused on mirrored fields as a diagnostic for Proof 1856 Flying Eagle cents, despite its apparent obvious unreliability, while ignoring the much more trustworthy weakness of strike? I was too, until I realized that the situation with this particular coin was the exception to the norm. Typically, MS coins are not minted using polished dies, so mirrored fields are typically a surefire way to identify a Proof. On the other hand, weakness of strike is typically not nearly as reliable a diagnostic, since other coins are typically not as hard, allowing even MS coins to have a full strike.

So, now that we've figured out which coins are the MS and which are the Proofs, aren't we done figuring out which ones are the originals? That's certainly what many collectors probably still believe. But, as we're about to find out, the originals aren't simply the MS coins and the restrikes aren't simply the Proofs.

Determining the Originals - Step 2

As we just discussed, the first article ("1856 Flying Eagle Snow-3: MS or Proof?") establishes that all but one Snow-3 are MS. The second article, "1856 Flying Eagle Cent: Determining the Originals" (Vol 32.3, December 2022), then takes that knowledge and combines it with other established facts and logical reasoning to determine, for each of the die pair varieties, which coins are the originals and which are restrikes. With the exception of the Snow-5 and Snow-9 die pairs, these two articles leave no ambiguity. Even for Snow-5 and Snow-9, where some ambiguity remains, these articles provide enough clarity to make possible informed decisions on whether to collect them as originals.

Don't just take my word for it, though! I highly encourage you to dive into the articles and discover the reasoning behind each die pair for yourself. To give you an overview, I'll summarize the key points and address a subtle oversight in the "1856 Flying Eagle Cent: Determining the Originals" article.

Snow-3

In the first article ("1856 Flying Eagle Snow-3: MS or Proof?") we learn that almost all Snow-3s are MS coins due to their weakness of strike, but there is one exception - the "Bluebird," a clear Proof with absolutely no weakness of strike!



MS Snow-3 with Moderate weakness of strike - Misattributed PR66+ PCGS (CAC)

The second article (“1856 Flying Eagle Cent: Determining the Originals”) points out that the re-strikes were all Proof coins, because that was what collectors wanted at the time. From that fact, it follows that the Snow-3 MS coins must all be originals.

So, what about the “Bluebird”? Even though it’s a Proof, it’s actually an original too! This is because it has the earliest die stage (die stage A) of Snow-3’s obverse die (Obv. 1), placing it before the MS Snow-3s (die stage A through C).

So all of the Snow-3s are originals, but the question of when they were minted still lingers. Was it 1856 or could it have been 1857? I realized after the “1856 Flying Eagle Cent: Determining the Originals” article was published that, for completeness, I should consider the possibility, however remote, that the Snow-3s were minted starting in 1857. For now, we’ll assume that the Snow-3s were minted starting in 1856. But, don’t worry, we’ll come back to the possibility of 1857 in due time. The objective here is to determine the originals and our assumption that the Snow-3s were minted in 1856 won’t change that conclusion in any way.

Snow-1

The “1856 Flying Eagle Cent: Determining the Originals” article explains that all Snow-1s, even though they are Proofs, are also Originals. The Snow-1s were minted with the same obverse die (Obv. 1) as Snow-3, and that die was in its earliest stage (die stage A) when it was used to mint the Snow-1s. This means that all Snow-1s are also Originals, for the same reason that the “Bluebird” is an Original.

The 12 known Snow-1s, along with the “Bluebird” (the only Proof Snow-3), are especially rare Proof originals.

Snow-2, Snow-4, Snow-10

The “1856 Flying Eagle Cent: Determining the Originals” article explains that these are all restrikes, since their reverse dies were made in 1857 and 1858, after the Original striking period.

Snow-9

The “1856 Flying Eagle Cent: Determining the Originals” article uncovers enough of the mystery of the Snow-9s to reveal that collecting them as originals simply doesn’t make sense.

Let’s travel back to 1856, when we assume that the Snow-3s were first minted. If the Snow-9s had also been minted in that year, the Snow-5s would have also been minted that year too, since the Snow-5 has an earlier die stage (die stage A) of the reverse die (Rev. D) it shares with Snow-9 (die stages B-F). But, here’s the catch - for this to be true, it would have been necessary for three obverse dies to have been made in 1856 (Obv. 1 for Snow-1 and Snow-3, Obv. 2 for Snow-5, and Obv. 5 for Snow-9), and historical records show us that there were only two obverse dies made in 1856.

However, there’s still a chance that the Snow-9s were minted starting in early 1857, before the Coinage Act was passed. Imagine the possibility that some Snow-9 originals were actually minted in 1857. It could explain why a surprising number of Snow-9s have ended up in circulated conditions, despite their being Proofs. Normally, Proofs are made specifically for collectors and so they typically don’t enter circulation. However, if Snow-9 originals were delivered to Congress in early 1857, it’s easy to imagine that they might have ended up eventually being spent. In fact, records show that extra deliveries were made to Congress that year. But, that’s just a theory, and another theory is that the mint simply had a surplus of unsold Proof Snow-9s, and eventually released them into circulation.

So, it’s possible that some Snow-9s could be originals. But, as it turns out, Snow-9s were also minted in large numbers well after 1858, leading us to conclude that the majority of Snow-9 coins are re-strikes, not originals.

To summarize the conclusion for Snow-9, although some Snow-9s could be originals, with the bulk of the Snow-9s definitely restrikes, it certainly wouldn’t make sense to collect Snow-9s as originals.

Snow-5

Unraveling the mysteries of the Snow-5 continues to be a fascinating puzzle for collectors. Although some questions remain unanswered, we can finally make a solid conclusion about the best way to collect them.

We just figured out that no Snow-9s were minted in 1856. However, it's possible that the obverse die of Snow-9 (Obv. 5) was created in 1856, but wasn't used that year to mint any coins. But here's the catch: if Snow-9's obverse (Obv. 5) was made in 1856, then Snow-5's obverse (Obv. 2) couldn't have been made that year. Why is this? Well, we already know that only two obverse dies were created in 1856, one of which (Obv. 1) was needed for the Snow-1s and Snow-3s, which were minted that year.

So, here's the problem. If Snow-5's obverse die was created after 1856, it may not have been made in time to strike the Snow-5s before the Coinage Act that when enacted ended the original striking period on February 21, 1857. There are other factors that suggest Snow-5s might not be originals. See the "1856 Flying Eagle Cent: Determining the Originals" article for details.

In conclusion, Snow-5s might be originals, but we can't be sure. For collectors who want to ensure they are collecting originals, it's best to stick with Snow-3s or Snow-1s.

What if Snow-3s were first minted in 1857?

Recall that, after we determined Snow-3s are originals, the scenario that we decided assumes that they were minted in 1856. But there's still a remote possibility that they were minted starting in 1857. We'll now consider that possibility and show it doesn't change any conclusions.

Imagine if Snow-3 was first minted in 1857. If that were the case, it wouldn't have been possible for Snow-3 to be a part of the first delivery of hundreds of 1856 Flying Eagles to VIPs on December 4, 1856. The only other die pair variety minted in the hundreds was Snow-9, so it follows that Snow-9s would have been minted in 1856 for that first delivery of hundreds of the 1856 Flying Eagles. Furthermore, Snow-5, which has an earlier die stage (die stage A) of its reverse die (Rev. D) which it shares with Snow-9 (die stage B-F), would also have to be minted in 1856. But, with Snow-5 and Snow-9 both minted in 1856, this would account for both of the obverse dies made in 1856

(Obv. 2 for Snow-5 and Obv. 5 for Snow-9), which would mean that the obverse die (Obv. 1) used to mint Snow-1 and Snow-3 then couldn't have been made in 1856.

In this scenario, since we already have determined both Snow-1s and Snow-3s are originals, it would have been necessary for Obv. 1 to have been made in early 1857 and shortly thereafter used to strike all Snow-1s and Snow-3s before Feb 21, 1857, when the original striking period ended. Doing all that in under two months seems unlikely. This scenario also seems unlikely since Snow-1, with its tilted "ONE CENT" appears to be a prototype, and a prototype would be expected to be the first die pair variety minted, not the third (after Snow-5 and Snow-9 in 1856).

But, there is one reason to figure that this scenario might make sense. It would mean that more Snow-9 originals would have been minted, and that would help explain the significant number of Snow-9s in circulated grades as noted earlier.

Now the million-dollar question: does this scenario actually change anything? Well, for Snow-9, we know some originals would have certainly been made in 1856. But, that doesn't change the fact that Snow-9 restrikes were made in even greater numbers past 1858. So, as before it wouldn't make sense to collect Snow-9s as originals. As for Snow-5, they would all be originals in this scenario, but we already knew that Snow-5s could be all originals even if Snow-3s were minted in 1856. But, the scenarios where Snow-5s are restrikes are still possibilities too. Unless it can be proven that this scenario (Snow-3s made after 1856) is the only possibility, we are still left with the conclusion that Snow-5s could be originals, but they could also be restrikes.

Determining the Originals - Results

With much ambiguity now removed, we now know:

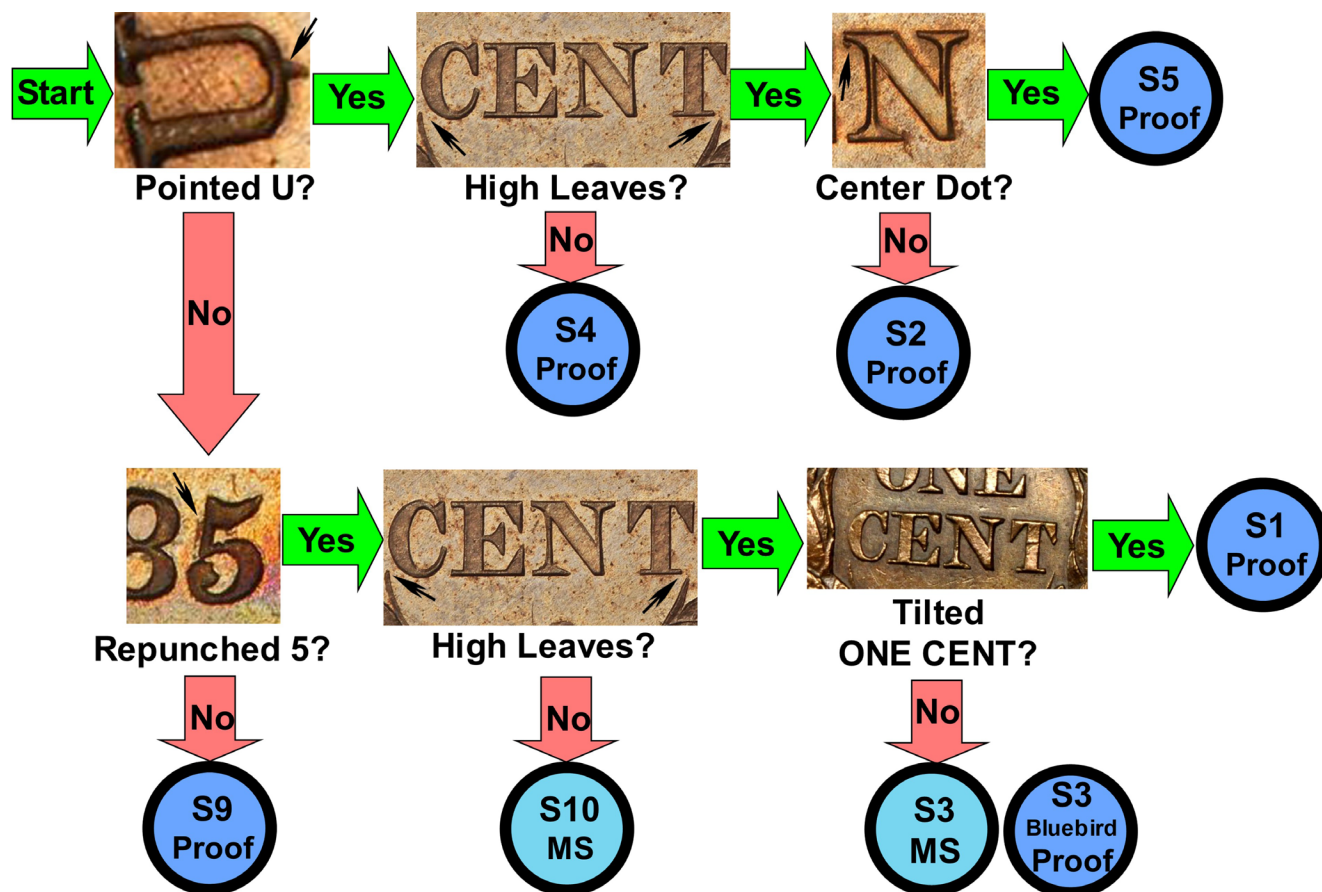
- All Snow-1s and all Snow-3s are definitely Originals
- Snow-5s may be Originals, but it's still possible they are restrikes.
- Snow-9s could have included some Originals, but they are mostly restrikes.
- All other die pairs (Snow-2, Snow-4, Snow-10) struck only restrikes.

Die pairs are useful for figuring a coin's full potential

As we've just shown in the previous section, the die pair allows you to determine whether a coin is MS or Proof, and even more importantly whether a coin is an Original or a restrike.

The process for finding the die pair is straightforward and shown in the following flowchart (from

"1856 Flying Eagle - Top MS and Proofs," Vol 30.2, August 2020). Though you can easily follow the flowchart to determine the die pair on your own, it's always recommended to pay the nominal fee to PCGS for the die pair attribution to be noted on the holder. This ensures that you don't have to convince other collectors of your attribution which might demonstrate you have an Original, for example.



**Determining 1856 Flying Eagle cent
Die Pair and hence Format**

Knowing a coin's die pair variety is only half the battle. It's also crucial to understand its rarity. That's why I dove into the numbers and used a statistical technique to bring you an estimate of the number of surviving coins of each of the die pairs. My findings were published in "Statistical Estimate of 1856 Snow-3 and Snow-9 Populations" (Vol 32.1, April 2022):

Snow-1: 12 Proofs (The article mentioned 10, but now 12 are known)
Snow-2: 6 Proofs
Snow-3: 252 MS and 1 Proof
Snow-4: 10 Proofs
Snow-5: 14 Proofs
Snow-9: 1,120 Proofs
Snow-10: 1 MS (Not in the article; added for completeness)

Total: 1416

For the true connoisseur, die pair varieties are a fascinating area of specialty. But for most collectors, the die pairs themselves might not be of immediate interest. However, that doesn't mean they should be ignored. On the contrary, knowing the die pair variety can actually unlock key information about a coin and help determine which categories it falls into. Is it an MS or Proof? An Original or a restrike? Knowing the die pair allows you to determine one of several possible categories of interest to collectors, and knowing those categories is useful for understanding how that particular coin can reach its full potential.

First of all, three established broad categories of interest are the following:

Originals: These are probably the most collectible coins, since they have historical significance, and since they were made in much fewer numbers than the restrikes. As we've just discussed, all Snow-1s and Snow-3s are known to be originals. There are 265 originals, which amount to 19% of all 1856 Flying Eagles.

Mint State: Of course there are collectors who are mainly interested in MS coins. However, I believe for the 1856 Flying Eagle Cent, much of the interest in MS coins is actually an interest in the originals, and the collector is simply assuming the MS coins are the originals. But, not all MS coins are originals (the one Snow-10 is a MS restrike), and furthermore the originals includes both the MS originals and the Proof originals. The MS coins are roughly 18% of all 1856 Flying Eagles.

Proofs: The Proofs are roughly 82% of all 1856 Flying Eagles.

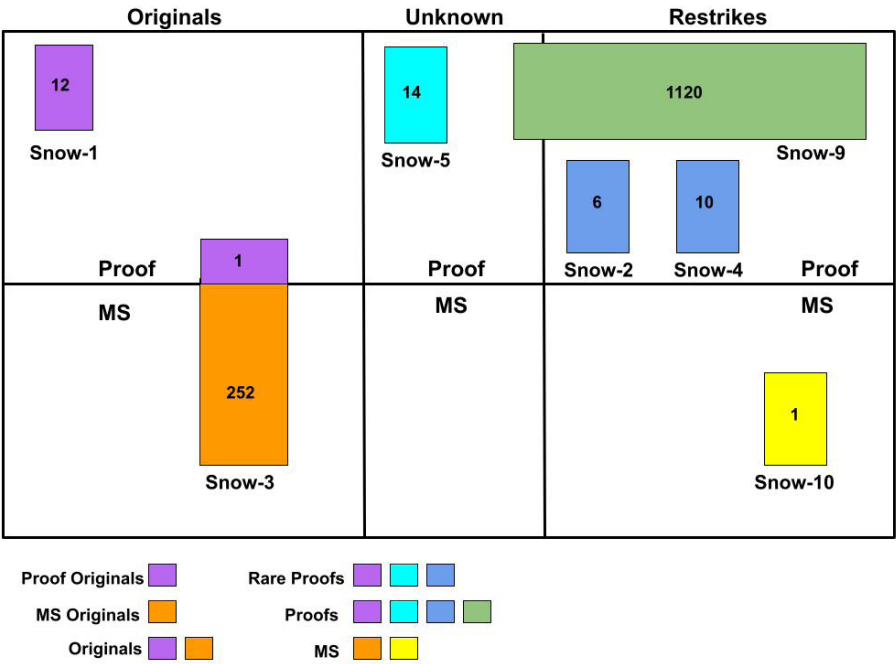
In addition to those three established broad categories, there are the following three subcategories that are useful to consider:

MS Originals: This is a subset of the Originals consisting of only the 252 MS Snow-3s, which are 95% of the Originals. The MS Originals are roughly 18% of all 1856 Flying Eagles.

Proof Originals: This is a subset of the Originals consisting of the 12 Snow-1s, along with the one Snow-3 Proof, the "Bluebird". Proof Originals are very rare, as they are less than 5% of all Originals and less than 1% of all 1856 Flying Eagles.

Rare Proofs: This is a subset of the Proofs, consisting of all the Snow-1s, Snow-2s, Snow-4s, and Snow-5s along with the one Snow-3 Proof, the "Bluebird." They are considerably rarer than the Snow-9 Proofs. There are only 43 total Rare Proofs, which is just 3% of all 1856 Flying Eagles.

In summary, the following figure illustrates for each die pair: the number of surviving examples, the categories that apply for that die pair, and where that die pair lies along the two dimensions that figure in the various categories, 1) Originals versus restrikes and 2) Proof versus MS.



*Die Pairs and Categories along 2 dimensions:
1) Originals-Restrikes 2) Proof-MS*

Reaching Full Potential

Let's now explore the secrets to unlocking the full potential of the 1856 Flying Eagle Cent. For the various categories and subcategories we just introduced, we'll explore the opportunities and pitfalls that come with collecting this iconic coin. In the "1856 Flying Eagle Cent - Opportunities and Pitfalls" article (Vol 30.3, December 2000), you'll find a wealth of information about the dos and don'ts of collecting this coin. And, here I'll summarize the key points and provide updates to keep you ahead of the game.

MS Originals

Looking for a smart investment? Look no further than MS Snow-3s in Proof holders! Currently selling for a fraction of the price of their correctly attributed MS holder counterparts, these coins are a fantastic opportunity for savvy collectors. And the best part? According to my "Statistical Estimate of 1856 Snow-3 and Snow-9 Populations" article, there are a whopping 96 MS Snow-3s misattributed as Proofs, out of a total surviving population of 252. But, this opportunity may not last long. As Rick Snow noted in the December 2022 market report, the soon-to-be-introduced CAC Grading has the potential to fix these misattributions. And once that happens, these coins are sure to soar in value, matching the prices of correctly attributed MS Snow-3s. So, don't miss your chance to get in on this exciting opportunity!

CAC Grading is about to shake things up!

While MS Snow-3s in Proof holders will see a boost in value (once they cross over to CAC MS holders), MS Snow-3s in MS holders are expected to experience a decrease in value. The reason? With so much misattribution in the market, correctly attributed MS Snow-3s have been in short supply, causing them to sell at a premium price. But, once CAC Grading starts to correct these misattributions, that premium will no longer make sense, and all correctly attributed MS Snow-3s will be priced the same:

- A MS65 Snow-3 in MS holder (graded MS65): now worth \$100K, but should become worth \$75K in MS65 CAC holder.
- A MS65 Snow-3 in PR holder (graded PR65): now worth \$50K, but should become worth \$75K in MS65 CAC holder.

The finest MS Snow-3 is currently misattributed as PR67+ PCGS (CAC): 40323017. Even with its misattribution as a Proof, it sold recently for \$240,000 at auction (Heritage Sept 17, 2020, Lot #10008). By the same reasoning just discussed, it ought to be worth 50% more (\$360,000) once its misattribution is fixed by CAC Grading. The 2nd finest MS Snow-3 is also currently misattributed as PR66+ PCGS (CAC): 15731123.



Finest MS Snow-3 Misattributed PR67+ PCGS (CAC) - \$240,000 Heritage Sept 17, 2020

The future of MS Snow-3s is still uncertain, with the introduction of CAC Grading having been announced but not yet put into action. But don't lose hope just yet! There are still several possibilities that could come into play and potentially address the misattribution issue. CAC may eventually move forward with their grading plans, a new grading company with the ability to correct misattributions may emerge, collectors may become more knowledgeable about the misattributions, or a trusted authority may offer a sticker to indicate a coin's true MS status. The outcome is still up in the air, but one thing is for sure: as collectors become more knowledgeable, what's on the holder may become increasingly less important. It's still an MS Snow-3 even if it's in a PR holder.

While MS Snow-3s in Proof holders provide opportunities to exploit, Proofs in MS holders are pitfalls to avoid. Don't get caught in the trap of buying a Snow-9 Proof misattributed and placed in a MS holder! As highlighted in the "1856 Flying Eagle Cent - Opportunities and Pitfalls" article, a shocking 36% of coins in MS holders are actually Proofs (and they are restrikes, not Originals). Instead of paying top dollar for an MS-attributed Snow-9 (\$100K for MS65), you can score the same coin for a fraction of the price in its proper PR65 holder (\$30K for PR65).

But, what if you've already fallen into this trap? Don't despair! While it's unethical to pass off

such a misattributed coin as a true MS, it could still hold value to a collector looking to complete a registry set, as long as its true status is disclosed. So, hold on to hope and look for creative solutions rather than taking a significant loss. Stay vigilant and avoid being bamboozled by misattributed Proofs!

Proof Originals

Of the 265 Originals (252 MS Snow-3s, 1 PR Snow-3, 12 Snow-1), only 13 are Proofs. The Proof Originals are considerably rarer than the MS Originals.

With only a handful in existence and some even vanishing without a trace (one stolen from a museum and another lost during transit to PCGS), the chance to own a Snow-1 is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. And, in a recent exciting development, the finest known Snow-1 graded PR64 was put up for sale for an awe-inspiring \$100K!

Based on that asking price of \$100K for the finest Snow-1, graded PR64 PCGS (CAC), it looks like the market already recognizes the value of these elusive coins and values them higher than MS Snow-3s, which would go for about \$45K for MS64 Snow-3 at the time of this writing. But, with the Snow-1s being so rare, it wouldn't be surprising if they were valued even more in the future. As more collectors yearn to add a Snow-1 to their collection, the demand for these coins may drive the price even higher. For



Finest of 12 Surviving Snow-1s - One of 13 Proof Originals - PR64 PCGS (CAC)



The “Bluebird” - The Only Proof Snow-3 - PR66 PCGS (CAC)

now, it seems that only a select few collectors are even aware of the existence of Proof Originals.

The “Bluebird” - the one and only Proof Snow-3 - is a hidden treasure waiting to be discovered. In my article “1856 Flying Eagle Cents - Hidden Treasures” (Vol 31.3, December 2021) I shed light on the profound difference between appearance and reality for this coin and for two other coins featured in that article. As the truth about the “Bluebird” becomes more widely known, it will reach its full potential:

Appearance: The “Bluebird” attributed PR66 PCGS (CAC) is one of four Proofs graded PR66, with 3 coins attributed as Proofs graded higher for PCGS. The market, confusing Proofs for restrikes, thinks of it as one of four coins tied for 4th place among the restrikes. At the time of this writing, PCGS values Snow-3 PR66 as \$87,500, while it values generic (Snow-9) PR66 as \$75,000, so presumably PCGS somehow thinks of it as a slightly more valuable restrike than the usual Snow-9 restrikes.

Reality: The “Bluebird,” correctly attributed PR66 PCGS (CAC), is certainly not a restrike; it is an Original. But, it is not merely an Original, but rather a much rarer Proof Original, and in fact the rarest and also the highest graded of the Proof Originals. Furthermore, of the three coins attributed as Proofs graded higher, two are actually misattributed MS Snow-3s, leaving only one Proof actually graded higher, a PR67 Snow-9.

There is one more thing that may be holding back the “Bluebird” from reaching its full potential. Since PCGS and NGC for almost 20 years have, according to their policy, stopped attributing coins as MS, there are quite a few MS Snow-3s now misattributed as Proofs. As noted earlier, there are an estimated 96 MS Snow-3s misattributed as Proofs and they each will be worth 50% more once they are crossed over to CAC as MS Snow-3s to fix their misattribution. In the meantime, these estimated 96 Snow-3s misattributed as Proofs make the only actual Proof Snow-3, the “Bluebird”, look less rare than it actually is. But, even if CAC Grading doesn’t fix the misattribution, collectors are increasingly becoming familiar with the fact that these 96 MS Snow-3s attributed as Proofs are not really Proofs.

Getting back to Proof Originals in general, it is worth noting that none of them are in MS holders. All 12 of the Snow-1s and the one Proof Snow-3 are correctly attributed as Proofs, so there are no pitfalls to avoid amongst the Proof Originals.

Rare Proofs

Discover the hidden treasures of the 43 Rare Proofs! We’ve already explored the Rare Proofs which are also Originals, the 12 Snow-1s and the one and only Proof Snow-3. But, hold on, because the Snow-2s, Snow-4s, and Snow-5s are often overlooked in the market and sell for almost the same price as the much more common Snow-9s. This is an opportunity waiting to be exploited! Don’t settle for a Snow-9 if you

could get your hands on a Snow-2, Snow-4, or Snow-5 Rare Proof. As more collectors awaken to the rarity of these underpriced coins, it's not far-fetched to think that Rare Proofs could someday sell for more than the MS Snow-3 Originals. These Rare Proofs are 6 times rarer than the MS Snow-3 Originals and it's only a matter of time before the market recognizes their true worth. Don't let the opportunity pass you by; join the hunt for these rare treasures today!



One of two finest of 6 Surviving Snow-2s - PR64 CAM PCGS (CAC)

Fortunately there are not many pitfalls with Rare Proofs. All Snow-1s, Snow-2s, and the one Snow-3 Proof have been correctly attributed as Proofs. Of the 10 Snow-4s, I'm only aware of one that is misattributed (MS63 - 4884320). Of the 14 Snow-5s, there are 3 that are misattributed (MS63: 03129300, MS63: 50223508, and MS66: 33274507). All four of these misattributed coins should be fixable by CAC Grading which would end up getting them into proper Proof holders. They could even be fixed today by breaking them out of their holder and submitting them raw to PCGS, since PCGS now attributes anything submitted raw as Proof, even if they had previously attributed them as MS before it's being broken out of its holder to submit raw.

One final pitfall to consider in general, not just for Rare Proofs (but the example here happens to pertain to Rare Proofs): Someone considering any coins should research them thoroughly. I'll leave it as an exercise to the reader, but it's possible that a careful collector, who thoroughly researches the coins

they purchase, may come across an article published 2 years ago: "What happened to one of the finest Snow-5 1856 Flying Eagles" (Vol 31.1, April 2021).

Proofs

Proofs consist of the Rare Proofs, which we've already covered, and the Snow-9, which we'll now explore. Though not as rare as the Rare Proofs, the Snow-9 is the go-to for collectors seeking a Proof to complete their collection. With a generous supply of an estimated 1120 surviving coins, obtaining a Snow-9 won't be a difficult feat.

But here's the real opportunity; the real treasures lie in the upper echelons of grading. Snow-9s in high grades are rare gems. The true rarity lies in the Snow-9s rated PR65+ or higher, of which there are only a handful, and none with the coveted CAC sticker above PR65+. Don't miss the opportunity to own a truly rare Snow-9:



Finest Snow-9 PR67 PCGS

Grade	Total / Better	Coins
67	1 / 0	PR67: 31986427
66+	1 / 1	PF66+: 2076275-003
66	2 / 2	PR66: 38725099 PF66: 636954-002
65+	3 / 4	PR65+:38604205 (CAC) 39135198 (CAC) 02863234 (CAC)

Final Thoughts

When it comes to collecting 1856 Flying Eagle cents, don't settle for a shallow understanding. Dig deeper to uncover hidden treasures and avoid costly mistakes.

A prevailing shallow understanding of the 1856 Flying Eagle cent is that the coins with MS on their holder are the Originals and the coins with PR

on their holder are the restrikes. A collector with such a shallow and incorrect understanding who sets out to obtain an Original 1856 Flying Eagle cent by acquiring one with MS on its holder:

- Has a 36% chance of actually buying a restrike Proof that has been misattributed as MS. Even Russian Roulette has better odds!
- Will miss out on the two finest MS Originals that are misattributed PR67+ PCGS (CAC) and PR66+ PCGS (CAC), and will also miss out on the 96 MS Snow-3 Originals that are misattributed as proofs and which can be purchased for half the price of MS Snow-3s that have been correctly attributed as MS.
- Will miss out on the much rarer Proof Originals which amount to only 5% of the overall Originals: 12 Proof Snow-1s and the 1 Proof Snow-3, the "Bluebird".

1857 Type of 1857



1857 PR4

Obv. S: (LE) Broken wing tip hub. Moderate doubling visible on the tops of "UNITE" and Eagle's beak. Very minor doubling elsewhere. Die striations from 10:00 to 4:00.

Rev. J: Die striations from 11:00 to 5:00. Rough areas connect the ribbon ends with the denticles.

Attributed to: Phil Accordinio

Same dies as S5. Earliest die state seen. The dies are rotated as shown with the eagle flying upwards when the reverse is level. The only example presently known was graded by PCGS unattributed as 1857 PR64. It was then sent in again for the attribution. It came back as an 1856 S5, an obvious error. It was finally corrected to 1857 S5 PR64. It now has its own subcategory under 1857 Proof in the PCGS Coin Facts database attributed as S5. It should be listed there as S-PR4.



1857 PR4 Date area.

1862

S13 1862, File marks by ear.

Obv. 15: (B) Heavy die file marks around the ear. A long one extends from the hair curl to the neck. Date low, similar to S10, but the date position is different.

Rev O: Olive leaf and shield points away from the denticles.

Attributed to: Craig McLaine

The die was modified as the area around the ear was above the level of the field. Very similar to S10. Compare date positions and the shape of the file marks. {50}



S13 1862, File marks by ear.



S13 1862, Date area.

1866



S17 1866, 6/6 (s).

S17 1866, 6/6 (s).

Obv. 18: (B) Minor repunching on the last 6. The die is extremely concave. Heavy die crack from the rim at 5:30 to the tip of the ribbon. Die crack from the rim at 8:30 through the E in UNITED to the portrait just under the nose. Die crack from the rim at 2:00 to the A in AMERICA.

Rev. R: Shield points and olive leaf away from the denticles. Die crack from the denticles though the wreath to the middle of the top arrowhead.

Attributed to: David Killough

The extreme concavity of the obverse die makes the struck coins very weak in the center. The cheek, ear and middle hair curl are higher than the rims and are extremely weak. Grading any of these as MS would be a challenge. {50}

1873 Open 3

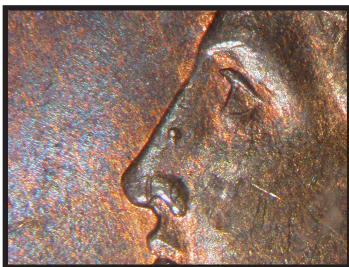
S11 1873 Open 3, 873/873 (s), Digit in denticles.

Obv. 11: (RE) Repunching visible under the upper loop of the 8 and by the tops of the 7 & 3. The top of a digit is visible above the denticles below the 7 in the date. Die chip on the bridge of the nose.

Rev. M: Right shield point and olive leaf just connected to the denticles. Left shield point away.

Attributed to: Steve Lawson

The die chip is diagnostic. {65RB}



S11 1873 Open 3, Die chip on nose.



S11 1873 Open 3, 873/873 (s),
Digit in denticles.

1875

S22 1875, Die file marks in shield

Obv. 24: (B) Full D hub. Date closer to the denticles than the bust point.

Rev. X: Heavy horizontal die file marks are visible in the lower half of the shield. Shield points and olive leaf away from the denticles. Die cracks extend from the denticles at 9:00 and continue up into the wreath to 11:00 and down to 7:00.

Attributed to: Walter Seiller.

Heavy die file marks in the shield could be caused by damage to the blank die. When the die gets hubbed any damage to the die face will get pushed down with the design. A higher grade example would need to be seen to confirm. {10}



S22 Die file marks in shield.

1880



S4g 1880, Broken 88.

Obv. 30 (LE) Both 8's show breakage and the 0 is beginning to break, but not enough to list this as a Broken 880. Light extra outlines on UNITED only.

Rev. AF: Shield points connected to the denticles. Olive leaf away. Heavy die crack from the denticles from 11:30 to 12:30, though the top of the shield.

Attributed to: David Killough

The broken digit punch is starting to transition to the broken three-digit dies. {58}

S4f 1880, Broken 88.

1883

PR7 1883, Die line in 3.

Obv. 28: (B) An vertical die line in the bottom loop of the 3 on the right side.

Rev. AC: Olive leaf away from denticles. Shield points just connected.

Similar date position to PR5. the atrifacts on the 3 is different on each.



PR7 1883

1888



1888 PR4.

PR4

Obv. 38: (RH) The left edge of the 1 is directly under the left edge of the bust point. A very horizontal die polish lines are above the pearls.

Rev. AF: Shield points connected to the denticles. Olive leaf just away.

The example seen was very well struck with good mirrors.

1902

S23 1902, Digit in denticles.

Obv. 26: (LE) The top of a digit is visible in the denticles below the right side of the 0 in the date.

Rev. W: Right shield point connected in the denticles. Left shield point away. Olive leaf well away from the denticles.

Attributed to: Mitch Wikinson

The shape of the misplaced digit look like the side of an 0 digit. {60RB}



S23 1902, Digit in denticles.

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and
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